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ABSTRACT

Since many of the concerns motivating research on bilingual education are inherently those of a conflict theory approach, it is not surprising to find increasing dissatisfaction with the traditional quantificational mode of research, as contrasted with the qualitative mode. There is likely to be a close link between research questions, method of investigation, and the researcher's discipline. In the literature of bilingual education, there is a confusion between methodology and the researcher's perspective, and one is argued in terms of the other. Differences in ways of defining problems, often based on political and moral values, become covertly discussed in terms of research methodology. The joint application of ethnographic and quantitative approaches means that the research can benefit from the advantages of each. Quantitative studies gain from the element of description, and ethnographic studies gain from quantitative concerns for reliability and validity. The next decade will probably see considerable advances in research techniques stemming from the merging of qualitative and quantitative methods. (MSE)

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RESEARCH ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES*

Christina Bratt Paulston

> Then how long will it last, this love? [in jest]
> I don't know.
> Three weeks, three years, three decades...?
> You are like all the others...trying to *shorten eternity* with numbers, spoken quietly, but with intense feeling.
>
> (Lawrence Durrell, *Justine*)

Most research on bilingual education has dealt with quantitative variables within a structural-functional approach. Since many of the concerns motivating the research on bilingual education are inherently those of a conflict theory approach, it is not surprising to find an increasing dissatisfaction with the traditional quantificational mode of research. This paper will discuss some of these issues now attracting attention in the United States. This presentation is not a scholarly paper, but rather reflections and reportage, drawing on National Institute of Education proposals and planning papers, unpublished papers, and discussions with colleagues. To say that this is not a scholarly paper is not to belittle the importance of the topic, rather it is an apologia for as yet unclearly formed new thoughts. The direction toward qualitative research on bilingual education is the most important development seen during the last ten years.

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*This paper was presented at the Nordiska Två-språkighetssymposiet, "Scandinavian Conference on Bilingualism," Umeå University, Sweden, June, 1980.

Kuhn (1971) posits the notion of paradigm shift. By "paradigms," Kuhn means the way a scientific community views a field of study, identifies appropriate problems for study, and specifies legitimate concepts and methods. The literature and research that questions the exclusivity of quantitative methodologies in educational research frequently draws on Kuhn for key concepts, and it is useful to examine the at-times contradictory findings on bilingual education. R. Paulston (1976), drawing on the literature of social and educational change, posits two major paradigms: the functional or "equilibrium" paradigm and the conflict paradigm. Theories (that admittedly cross and overlap) falling within the equilibrium paradigm are evolutionary, neo-evolutionary, structural-functional, and system analysis. Basically, they are all concerned with maintaining society's equilibrium through the harmonious relationship of the social components, with an emphasis on smooth, cumulative change. The key concept for education programs is *efficiency*; and it is through arguments of increased efficiency that bilingual education is advocated, evaluated, and defended.

Theoretical approaches that fall within the conflict paradigm are: group conflict theory, cultural revitalization theory, and an anarchistic-utopian approach. These theories emphasize the inherent instability of social systems and the consequent conflict over values, resources, and power. The definition of *the* problem of bilingual education from a conflict perspective is no longer the functionalist "unequal opportunity" but rather one of structured inequity, of "persistence of poverty, intractability of inequality of incomes and inequality of economic and social opportunity" (Bowles *et al.*, 1976). Unequal opportunity, whose existence is certainly not denied, tends to be seen as a result of a condition of inequity rather than as a cause of school failure. Consequently, in conflict-oriented studies, the solutions to educational problems are rarely sought in terms

of technocratic efficiency; the emphasis is on *equity*. This leads to disagreement over the evaluation of bilingual education programs. (For a detailed discussion, see C. B. Paulston, 1980.)

The bias of this writer tends toward a world view of the conflict paradigm, but this is not to say that a conflict perspective is the most fruitful approach to all questions in bilingual education. Clearly, what is needed is a dialectic, working out those questions within the field of bilingual education that are most fruitfully approached from a structural-functional approach and those best approached from a conflict perspective. Sometimes the same problem can be approached from both perspectives: On the issue of teacher qualifications, English as a Second Language (ESL) proponents argue for Anglo teachers, i.e., native speakers of English, to promote efficient teaching, while bilingual education proponents argue for minority teachers to promote ethnic group belongingness. Such diverse answers can be seen to clarify not only the questions and the underlying assumptions but also to identify additional variables to consider in the research design. The evaluation research on the Canadian immersion programs typically never considers teacher ethnicity as a variable--and that is in itself important information--if one happens to notice this.

Parallel to these discussions of the literature on theoretical approaches on social and educational change, an increasingly concerned debate on quantitative versus qualitative approaches to educational research has been conducted. One of the best introductory sources is Cook and Reichardt's *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research* (1979) with its many excellent references. They define quantitative methods as "techniques of randomized experiments, quasi-experiments, paper and pencil 'objective' tests, multivariate statistical analyses, sample surveys, and the like" in contrast to qualitative methods, which include "ethnography, case studies,

in-depth interviews, and participant-observation" (p. 7). As Rist (1977) points out, "quantitative research is *the* dominant methodology in educational research" (p. 42). Many cite Campbell and Stanley (1963): "the only available route to cumulative progress" (p. 3) and their view on experimental design as "the only means for settling disputes regarding educational practice, the only way of verifying educational improvements, and the only way of establishing a cumulative tradition in which improvements can be introduced without the danger of a faddish discard of old wisdom in favor of inferior novelties" (p. 2). This methodology is seen as derived from the natural sciences:

> Human events are assumed to be lawful; man and his creations are part of the natural world. The development, elaboration, and verification of generalizations about the natural world become the first task of the researcher. (Rist, 1977, p. 42)

And this is, of course, the problem. Human behavior is not always lawful. The argument against standard quantitative methodology is that it is not enough to *know*, one must also *understand* the inner perspective of human behavior, the difference between *wissen* and *verstehen*. Rist (1977) states: "Qualitative research is predicated upon the assumption that this method of 'inner understanding' enables a comprehension of human behavior in greater depth than is possible from the study of surface behavior, the focus of quantitative methodologies" (p. 44).

The basic difference between the two methods is that the quantitative approach begins with models and hypotheses and predetermined variables while the "qualitative methodology allows the researcher 'to get close to the data,' thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself" (Filstead, 1970, p. 6).

An example comes from this writer's fieldwork on Catalan language maintenance, a proposal to investigate the continued use of Catalan in Spain

as a function of ethnic group boundary maintenance (Barth, 1969). It was a neat proposal, only it was wrong. Halfway through, during some interviews, I discovered that Catalunya is a matter of nationalism, not ethnicity. This discovery invalidated the use of the theoretical framework and attempted explanations. I could easily have missed such data; nothing short of living in Barcelona, participant-observation, or getting close to the data could have allowed me this insight and shown me the necessity to reconceptualize my categories. It is a typical pro-qualitative methodology argument.

Filstead (1979) sums up the comparison between the two approaches, cast, as are many of the discussions, in Kuhn's (1971) terms of paradigms and paradigm clash:[1]

> In sum, the quantitative paradigm employs a lock-step model logicodeductive reasoning from theory to propositions, concept formation, operational definition, measurement of the operational definitions, data collection, hypothesis testing, and analysis. The qualitative paradigm is a dynamic interchange between theory, concepts, and data with constant feedback and modifications of theory and concepts based on the data collected. This emerging, refined "explanation framework" gives direction to where additional data need to be collected. It is marked by a concern with the discovery of theory rather than the verification of theory. (Filstead, 1979, p. 38)

It is interesting that virtually all structural-functional research on bilingual education is quantitatuve. Within the conflict theory perspective there are exceptions, such as Toukomaa's quantitative work, which is clearly neo-marxist[2] in value orientation; but all qualitative research

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[1] I do not believe myself that research methodology is of the same category as theoretical paradigms, and hence find the methodological controversy not to be paradigmatic. But that need not worry us here.

[2] Marxism has never gained the legitimate academic status in America that it has in Europe, and American social scientists tend to prefer the term "group conflict theory" in lieu of "neo-marxism."

on bilingual education, or applicable to bilingual education, can be classified as belonging to a conflict perspective. There is no satisfactory explanation for this. As R. G. Paulston (1979) points out: "The relationships between a choice of theoretical framework and choice of appropriate methodology is all too little studied" (p. 27). At this point, one can only speculate.

Most research on bilingual education is evaluation research. Such research claims to draw on all available disciplines but in fact draws primarily on the behavioral sciences with an occasional sortie into sociology. These fields typically deal with research on predetermined variables that are operationalized and measured. In bilingual education, reading scores, vocabulary tests, and related matters of language proficiency also easily lend themselves to quantification[3] and research designs with treatment variables. The standard quantitative research design is easily applicable.

Recently, however, there has been an emphasis not only on two languages in the classroom but also on the cultures in contact; in the United States bilingual education is often referred to as bilingual/bicultural education. Ethnography does not deal with predetermined variables; and key concepts in the study of culture, culture conflict, and assimilation do not easily lend themselves to quantification. Although the literature on the dichotomy of quantitative and qualitative methods in evaluation research avoids any explanatory mention of the disciplines and their preferred mode of investigation, it seems undeniable that there is a close link between research questions, method of investigation, and the researcher's

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[3]For some of the difficulties in measuring other aspects of language proficiency, such as pronunciation, fluent and appropriate speaking, see Canale and Swain (1980) and Swain (1978).

particular discipline. This is all to the good in our concern with research methods. While choice of question is clearly tied to paradigm and world view, methods need not be, except by historical accident of training and expertise. Give a small boy a hammer and everything he encounters needs hammering, in Kaplan's words. We often conduct research the way we were trained, without any sense of moral commitment. We are more willing to learn new ways of data collection and analysis than we are of changing our world view.

To illustrate: During my tenure on a research grants committee, I encountered a proposal that posited a research design whose treatment consisted of a program to instruct Black mothers in "proper interaction" with their young children. The underlying rationale was that Black children fail in school due to faulty language because their mothers don't know how to interact with them. From my standpoint as a linguist, I know that Black children have anything but faulty language, and I rejected the problem formulation. From my personal standpoint, I found ludicrous the idea that mothers wouldn't know how to interact with their children. Most of all, I was indignant over the kind of value formulation that would lead to this kind of formalized attempt at cultural interference and pressure for assimilation into the ways of the superordinate group (vocabulary marked for a conflict perspective, incidentally). The methodology of the proposal was impeccable and I had no technical objections. Interestingly enough, I think it was my moral indignation rather than technical linguistic objections that was most effective in convincing the committee that the proposal did not merit funding. Research methodology in its narrow sense is not nearly as political and moral as the way we look at the world and the questions we ask.

The two, world view and methodology, are confused in the literature on bilingual education, where one is argued in terms of the other. The 1980

issues of *Invandrare och Minoriteter* (*Scandinavian Migration and Ethnic Minority Review*) (Ekstrand, 1980; Hanson, 1980; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1980) give us a representative example in the Ekstrand/Hanson/Skutnabb-Kangas debate.[4] Ekstrand (1980) argues from a classical structural-functional perspective on the basis of quantitative data for his point on native language classes and transitional models; primarily it seems to prove Cummins wrong and himself right. Much of what he says is common sense if you believe that the function of bilingual education is efficient teaching of the superordinate language and a mechanism for rapid assimilation of ethnic groups. From our viewpoint, the interesting thing is that he dismisses contradictory data with claims upon the canons of quantitative methodology: "It is even unlikely that so small a database could give any tenable basis for conclusions" (Ekstrand, 1980, p. 20). Ekstrand appears to be defending his own world view, using issues of research methodology. This is convenient as it assures that data not of his choosing are not acceptable.

Hanson (1980) refuses the bait and instead rejects Ekstrand's (1980) world views: "Mother-tongue classes do not aim directly for bilingualism. They aim primarily at giving the children a sense of security in their school work. When children feel secure, they can work in school. They can then among other things learn two languages" (Hanson, 1980, p. 8). No canons of research methodology can refute Hanson's view of the objectives of bilingual education; at most one can question whether it coincides with the legal Swedish position. Whether it does or not will not change Hanson's view; we do not need data and evidence from research to reject someone's world view.

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[4]Sweden has a large immigrant and refugee population, estimated variously to as much as one million in a country of some eight million inhabitants. The debate concerns bilingual education.

It is not coincidental that Hanson's key point of *trygghet* "security" is difficult to operationalize and measure on a paper and pencil objective test without trivializing the concept. Does that make it any less important? A key objection to exclusively quantitative research is that if you can't measure a concept, it doesn't exist. Incidentally, self concept is marginally related to *trygghet*; and in the American studies, children's scores on self concept increased in the bilingual program, not only for the Hispanic children but also for the Anglo and Black children. Without additional qualitative data, the reason for this cannot be explained. Perhaps the children felt secure.

Hanson does not deal with data; he bases his argument on judgment and simply appeals to the reader to choose the soundest argument. This is what all research, quantitative and qualitative, eventually comes to. Skutnabb-Kangas (1980) does give us data, beautiful qualitative data in the form of essays and poems written by immigrants. They are introduced by a paragraph that exemplifies the dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative methods:

> Lars Henric Ekstrand claims that Jim Cummins "must specify what makes the mother tongue so special." (Ekstrand, 1980, p. 20)
>
> This is a question which only monolingual stupidity can make. He who only has one language, he who has never seriously felt his language threatened, he has perhaps such an un-thought out and unconscious relationship to the meaning of her/his language. I shall again cite an immigrant. (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1980, p. 11)

No one can question of validity of Javala's feelings in the moving paragraphs that follow. What is questioned in the literature is the reliability of qualitative data, i.e., how representative is Javala's experience of the other Finnish immigrants or, to take an American example,

how representative is Rodriguez (1982) of the Chicano population?

I have digressed at this length to illustrate how differences in ways of defining problems in bilingual education research, often based on political and moral values, then become covertly discussed in terms of research methodology. Since it is unlikely that either Ekstrand (1980) or Skutnabb-Kangas (1980) will sway each other from their positions by their arguments, one wonders if this sort of debate creates anything except hard feelings.

He who pays the piper, calls the tune. Much evaluation research on bilingual education is funded by outside sources, here as well as in Sweden. I would like to think that such debates demonstrate to those in charge of allocating funds for research that you can be very subjective with quantitative research[5] and that there are alternative questions to be asked and other ways of thinking about data. This has been the case in the United States. Since the *Bilingual Education Act* of 1968, increasingly large amounts of federal monies[6] have been spent on bilingual education, to the sum of 150 million dollars in fiscal year 1979. Congress mandated a large-scale research study that formed the basis for a report to Congress in 1981, when the case for bilingual education was reevaluated (National Institute of Education, 1980a). Five million children is, after all, a sizable number of children about which to be concerned (National Institute of Education, 1980b). The basic arguments for the original legislation were those of efficiency: Non-English proficient children would learn English better in bilingual programs than in the traditional English monolingual programs. Now, more than ten years later, there is very little hard evidence to support such a claim:

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[5]For a United States example, see the Baker and deKanter report (1981) and the discussion about it.

[6]Public education in the United States is funded by the individual states with the exception of a few special programs, such as bilingual education.

"Furthermore, the reported results have been mostly negative or neutral" (Goodrich, 1980, p. 2). Everyone concerned about bilingual education wonders at this point what the future will hold.

Filstead (1979) writes:

> The quantitative model was looked upon as the only way to definitively know the (already assumed) positive impact of such programs.
>
> Given this climate, it is little wonder that so much allegiance was given this approach to program evaluation. Consequently, where the outcomes of these evaluations were ambiguous, or, worse, negative, and the mode and style of feedback difficult and at times impossible to comprehend, a sense of disenchantment with these approaches started to develop....With the results of many social interventions yielding unclear or negative impacts, bureaucrats began to distrust such evaluation approaches because they did not have potential benefit to their organizations. Furthermore, underlying these concerns was a growing belief that these types of quantitative evaluations really did not capture the "experience" or the "essence" of the intervention program under study. That is to say, program administrators often felt the evaluation effort achieved only an incomplete comprehension of the social intervention. (p. 40)

From the outside, it is difficult to ascribe motives to the NIE, which was asked to coordinate the Congress-mandated study. Whatever the reasons, however, in the Request for Proposal, NIE specifically asked for "an examination of ways to merge qualitative and quantitative information" (Goodrich, 1980, p. 21). He writes: "It seems essential to avoid the large scale research study that, because of its exclusive reliance on the quantitative paradigm, is likely to miss the positive effects of bilingual education" (p. 2). It would appear that most proponents/researches assume that evidence for bilingual education, which is real, deep, of inner understanding, and positive, is most likely to be reached through qualitative means. Goodrich (1980) charts the attributes of qualitative and quantitative approaches

(see Table 1), which he also perceives to be at the paradigmatic level, and discusses these issues.

In particular, I want to cite Goodrich's (1980) discussion of the Berliner and Tikunoff study (1976) as it gives an idea of the proposed lines of research. They attempted in the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES) to:

> ...combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies. They wished to identify variables across which more and less effective classrooms vary without constraining the investigation by using any of the traditionally oriented observation instruments. To do this they developed a list of instructional dimensions by ethnographic means. Ten more and ten less effective teachers were identified by examining gain scores of tests addressed directly to two week Experimental Teaching Units (ETU's). Ethnographers observed these classes (without knowledge of which were effective and which not) and prepared prose ethnographic protocols describing classroom behaviors. The protocols were paired (more versus less effective) and analyzed for variables, concepts, or dimensions that described inter-classroom variations. The very large initial list was pared to 61 mostly non-overlapping variables. These were then instrumented via rating scales, validated by reexamination of the original protocols. This technique combines phenomenological and logical-positivist approaches effectively. It begins with an open, atheoretical, observation that excludes little, and proceeds to scales that can be used in quantitative analyses.
>
> The BTES approach is a particular example of using phenomenological approaches as a basis for development of quantitative instruments. Variations of this method can and should be used in bilingual education instructional features studies, but the development of scales should also include verification of generalizability and predictive validity. (Goodrich, 1980, pp. 23-24)

Also of interest is the study by Cazden *et al.* (1980), which explores ways of quantifying ethnographic information through videotaping classroom

Table 1

ATTRIBUTES OF THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE PARADIGMS*

Qualitative Paradigm	Quantitative Paradigm
Advocates the use of qualitative methods.	Advocates the use of quantitative methods.
Phenomenologism; "concerned with understanding human behavior from the actor's own frame of reference.	Logical-positivism; "seeks the *facts* or *causes* of social phenomena with little regard for the subjective states of individuals."
Naturalistic and uncontrolled observation. Assumes a dynamic reality.	Obtrusive and controlled measurement. Assumes a stable reality.
Subjective.	Objective.
Close to the data; the "insider" perspective; valid; "real," "rich," and "deep" data.	Removed from the data; the "outsider" perspective; reliable; "hard" and replicable data.
Grounded, discover-oriented exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, and inductive	Ungrounded, verification-oriented, confirmatory, reductionist, inferential, and hypothetico-deductive.
Process-oriented.	Outcome-oriented.
Valid; "real," "rich," and "deep" data.	Reliable; "hard" and replicable data.
Ungeneralization; small samples or single case studies.	Generalizable; large samples.

*This table is adapted from Cook and Reichardt (1979). Some attributes have been combined and others discarded in an attempt to reduce overlapping (Goodrich, 1980, p. 22).

events. The point made in this study is that the culture of the classroom, monolingual or bilingual, must initially be approached through ethnographic procedures simply because the significance of events, e.g., a boy erasing a blackboard, must emerge emically from the context. The boy may erase the blackboard as punishment, as a favor for his teacher, or because he was the last person to write on the board (Rudes *et al.*, 1980). Until the researcher *understands* this action from its context, the event cannot even be counted as data since the category would be unclear. The report by Rudes *et al.* (1980) is intended to be a conceptual and methodological resource for those designing bilingual education research to take place in classroom settings, and a synthesis of the state-of-the-art in that field (p. 2). The report deals with technical issues of data collection, technical aids equipment such as videotaping, protocols, coding frameworks, etc., all within an ethnographic approach to research. There is considerable concern, at the technical level, with avoiding some of the "sloppiness" of ethnography and with increasing rater/observer reliability. There is concern for quantification as well.

Rudes *et al.* (1980) reaffirm that qualitative-quantitative studies are not either-or arrangements and that both types stand to profit from each other. Quantitative studies gain from "rich descriptions" and qualitative studies can benefit from quantitative concerns for reliability and validity. They cite the Cross Cultural Resource Center in Sacramento, California, which is currently using qualitative and quantitative methods, to study symbolic interaction (see Table 2):

> Three interrelated (and perhaps concentric) contexts, the community, school and bilingual program are being studied by using a series of qualitative approaches which each supply information on different facets of the context. The same is true of the quantitative techniques being used, which supply data on factual, attitudinal,

Table 2

FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH
(Symbolic Interaction)

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

Study of Community	Study of School	Study of Bilingual Program
Methods		
Qualitative		Quantitative
1. Participant Observation		1. Census
2. Event Analysis		2. Survey Questionnaires
3. Life History		3. Archival and Document Search
4. Comparative Interviewing		4. Content and Frequency Analysis of Record
5. Ethnographic Filming		5. Economic, Employment Political Trend Analysis
6. Micro-Ethnographic		
7. Projective Techniques		
Level 1 - Descriptive Ethnography		(first 12 months)
Level 2 - Trend Analysis		(second 12 months)
Level 3 - Theory Building and Hypothesis Testing		(Follow-up to study)

(Rudes *et al.*, 1980, p. 47)

> and statistical variables. Three levels of the study exist, with the first, and the basis for the other two levels, being descriptive ethnography which lasts one year. (Rudes *et al.*, 1980, p. 46)

Rudes *et al.* (1980) conclude with discussing the joint application of ethnographic and quantitative approaches. First, an ethnographic study can serve as a prelude to a quantitative study in which variables and hypotheses are first identified in the former and then "more rigorously" tested through the latter approach. Second, the two methods can be used concurrently in the same study, with a methodological separation of the two approaches. Here they see the quantitative method as the tool of ethnography. Third, ethnographic and quantitative methods may be merged and used concurrently in investigating the same research questions. This latter approach they hold likely to be unproductive for reasons "that the two methods basically have paradigms which are antagonistic to each other" (Rudes *et al.*, 1980, p. 70). This reasoning is far from clear, especially as the dichotomy does not seem to be at the paradigmatic level. It is likely that such a position is representative of our ignorance of such approaches rather than of any inherent impossibility. The next decade will probably see considerable advance in research techniques exactly in this approach of a concurrent merging of qualitative and quantitative methods. Rudes *et al.* (1980) conclude: "It should not be forgotten that both methodologies have a firm place in the study of behavior and interaction in bilingual education settings" (p. 73).

Some of the issues recently surfacing in the discussions of research on bilingual education in the United States have been touched upon in this paper. It is a significant new direction that we should take seriously. The relationship between theoretical paradigm and research methodology is still far from clear.

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